RAY-MON
RAY-SOC

Research-based analysis of European youth programmes

Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth Programme & the European Solidarity Corps

2024 – 2025

Key findings

Biennial monitoring surveys of the European youth programmes

October 2026

‘Erasmus+ Youth’ supports European youth projects as part of the Erasmus+ Programme. The European Solidarity Corps supports solidarity projects by young people across Europe. Together, they are the *European Youth Programmes*.

The ‘Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+ Youth’ (RAY-MON) and ‘Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of the European Solidarity Corps’ (RAY-SOC) are conducted by the RAY Network, which includes the National Agencies of the *European Youth Programmes* and their research partners in 34 countries*.

This short report presents a selection of key findings from the analysis of the results from surveys conducted between September 2025 and March 2026 with project participants and project teams involved in both programmes.

The data used for this report are based on surveys designed by the RAY Network in cooperation with a wide range of network and programme stakeholders. The data collection for this study was coordinated by EDUFI, the Finnish National Agency, and Youth Policy Labs, the transnational research partner, on behalf of the RAY Network.

This study was co-funded through TCA/NET resources of Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps. This report, however, reflects the views only of its authors, and neither the European Commission nor a National Agency can be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

* 34 countries in 2025/2026: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Türkiye.

Where available, national research reports can be requested from the respective National Agencies and their research partners

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FINNISH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

YOUTH POLICY LABS

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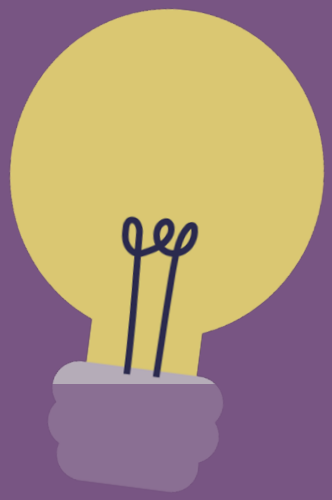

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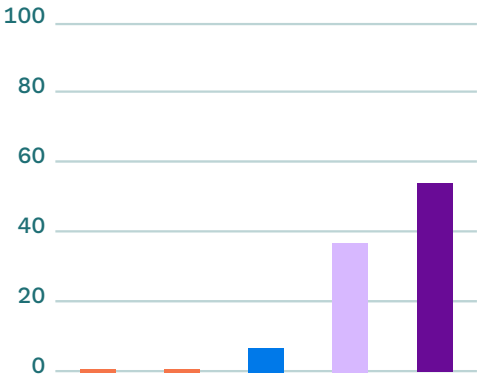
THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST

The European youth programmes aim to provide learning and engagement opportunities that foster intercultural awareness and intercultural dialogue, and to equip young people with the qualifications and skills needed for intercultural understanding. The focus on intercultural learning has shaped the European youth programmes from their very first pilot activities all the way to today. It is no surprise, but still a very welcome confirmation, that the programmes are exceedingly good at strengthening intercultural understanding. Young people, youth workers, and project team members all share profoundly positive feedback.

PARTICIPANTS IMPROVED THEIR ABILITY TO...

“... get along with people who have a different cultural background.



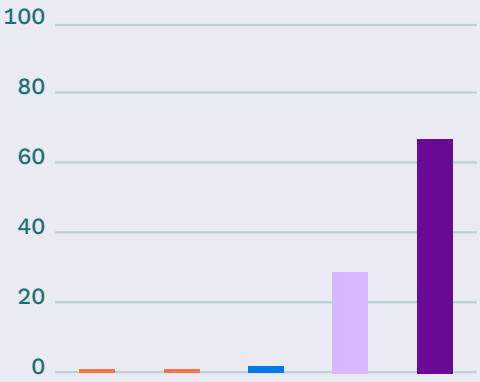
91% agree or agree strongly

1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
1% DISAGREE
7% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
37% AGREE
54% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of youth exchange and volunteering projects in the European youth programmes. n = 12.263

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS ASSESS THAT ...

> ... participants improved their ability to get along with people who have a different cultural background.



96% agree or agree strongly

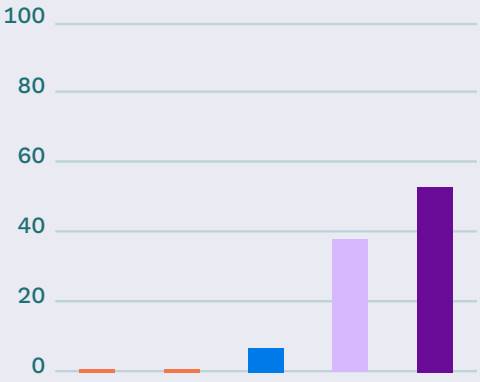
1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
1% DISAGREE
2% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
29% AGREE
67% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of project teams in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 2.680

YOUTH WORKERS IMPROVED THEIR ABILITY TO ...

> ... support young people to actively support diversity.



91% agree or agree strongly

1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
1% DISAGREE
7% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
38% AGREE
53% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of youth worker mobilities in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 8.093

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE

BRINGING YOUNG PEOPLE CLOSER TO EUROPE

Studying, learning, training, participating, and engaging in an intercultural context – and practicing solidarity and citizenship through studying, learning, training, participating, engaging – is at the core of the European youth programmes and their aim to strengthen a common sense of belonging across Europe. It is again no surprise, and a very welcome second confirmation, that the programmes remain very good at developing young people's European identity and sense of belonging.

CLOSENESS TO EUROPE

"Thinking back, how close did you feel to Europe before your project?

0 = NOT AT ALL CLOSE MEAN: 6.8 | MEDIAN 7.00 | N = 22.872 VERY CLOSE = 10

"And how close do you feel now?

0 = NOT AT ALL CLOSE MEAN: 8.2 | MEDIAN 8.00 | N = 23.134 VERY CLOSE = 10

Survey respondents of project participants in all formats of both European youth programmes. n_1 = 22.872, n_2 = 23.134

“I very much appreciate these kinds of projects. They have changed my life on a large scale. I have found friends across Europe. It has influenced my decision what to study as my master degree and makes me identify with the EU much more. I am very grateful I got the chance to take part in this and hope it reaches many more young people across Europe and beyond!”

Online survey respondent, youth exchange participant

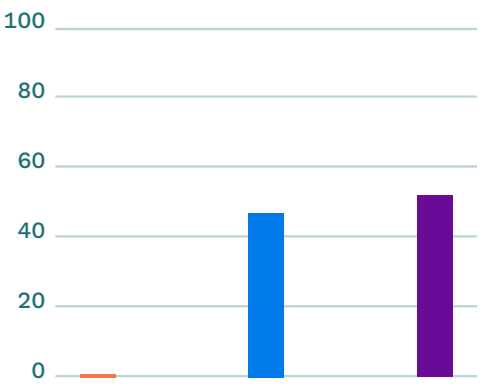
THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE

CATALYSTS FOR ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

The European youth programmes aim to support, through lifelong, intercultural learning, the development of young people as active citizens. Rooted in shared values, they seek to strengthen *European identity through active, democratic citizenship*, and *a sense of belonging as active, democratic citizens*. This focus, along with bringing young people closer to Europe and fostering intercultural understanding, has been present in the European youth programmes from the start. It is the third warmly welcome confirmation that the programmes are excellent at reaching their core objectives.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGE IN CIVIL SOCIETY ...

> "... more than before their project | to the same extent | less than before their project



52% engage more afterwards

1% ENGAGE LESS

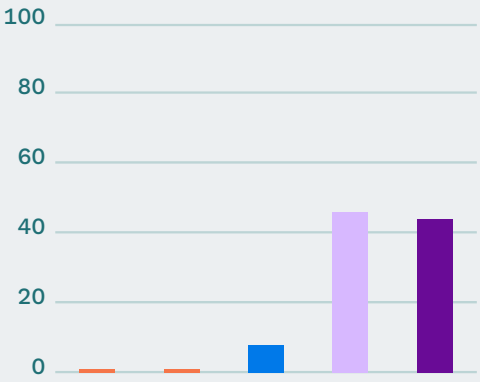
47% ENGAGE TO THE SAME EXTENT

52% ENGAGE MORE

Survey respondents of youth exchange and participation projects in Erasmus+ Youth. n = 10.282

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS ASSESS THAT ...

“... after the project, participants are better able to actively engage in civil society.



90% agree or agree strongly

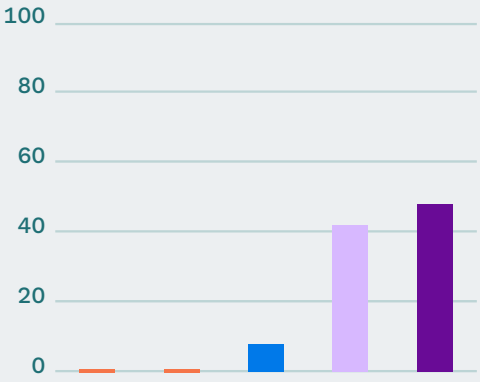
1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
1% DISAGREE
8% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
46% AGREE
44% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of project teams in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 2.771

YOUTH WORKERS IMPROVED THEIR ABILITY TO ...

“... support young people to actively engage in civil society.



90% agree or agree strongly

1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
1% DISAGREE
8% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
42% AGREE
48% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of youth worker mobilities in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 8.111

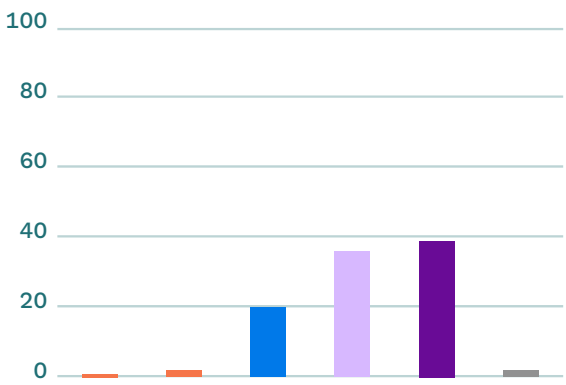
THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE

POWERHOUSES FOR EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK

The European youth programmes aim to support high-quality youth work. They seek to strengthen non-formal learning in the context of learning mobilities, participation and solidarity projects, and volunteering opportunities. They also strive to provide tools and systems for the training of youth workers. We explore a variety of aspects in this regard, including the impact of projects on youth work practice. Impact at organisational level is, as the figure below illustrates, a demonstrable and welcome impact of the European youth programmes in the youth field – but remains a challenge for some of our respondents (and understandably so in an environment of shrinking spaces for civil society).

PROJECTS HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE FIELD

> "The project already had an impact on my network/organisation.



75% agree or agree strongly

1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
2% DISAGREE
20% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
36% AGREE
39% AGREE STRONGLY
2% NOT APPLICABLE

Survey respondents of youth worker mobilities as well as project teams in Erasmus+ Youth. n = 10.736

“The project strengthened our confidence in working with young people through international projects. It showed us that even a small organisation from a remote island can build meaningful European partnerships and bring very concrete ideas back to the local level.”

*

Online survey respondent, youth worker

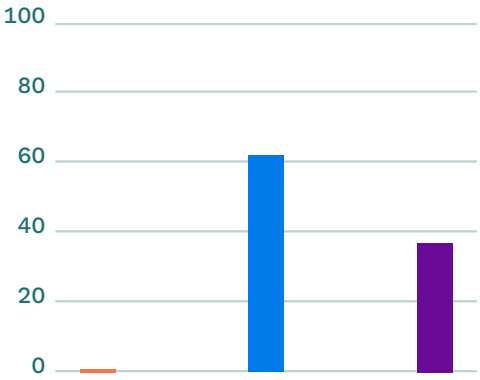
THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED

NEW IDEAS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR MEDIA LITERACY

Digital transformation, one of the four thematic priorities of the European youth programmes, continues to struggle. It is the priority with fewest applications, and fewest granted projects, reflecting an overall challenge of the youth field in this area. We analyse a number of aspects around the thematic priorities. The example shown below is the ability to identify misinformation, either generally or connected to the project's theme. While a crucial competence, especially in our day and time, only a third of responding participants manage to develop it further. Project teams have a more positive assessment – one of only a few examples where project team members overestimate learning effects considerably.

PARTICIPANTS CAN IDENTIFY MISINFORMATION ...

"... more than before their project | to the same extent | less than before their project



37% can identify more

1% CAN IDENTIFY MISINFORMATION LESS

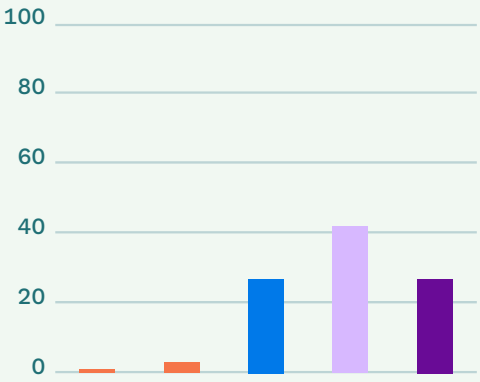
62% CAN IDENTIFY MISINFORMATION TO THE SAME EXTENT

37% CAN IDENTIFY MISINFORMATION MORE

Survey respondents of youth exchange and volunteering projects in the European youth programmes. n = 12.292

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS ASSESS THAT ...

> ... after the project, participants are better able to identify misinformation.



69% agree or agree strongly

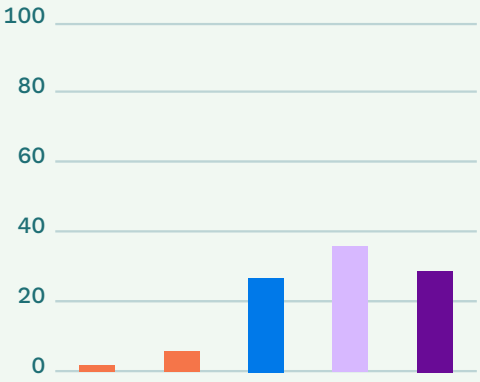
1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
3% DISAGREE
27% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
42% AGREE
27% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of project teams in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 2.768

YOUTH WORKERS IMPROVED THEIR ABILITY TO ...

> ... support young people to identify misinformation.



65% agree or agree strongly

2% DISAGREE STRONGLY
6% DISAGREE
27% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
36% AGREE
29% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of youth worker mobilities in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 8.079

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED

NEW APPROACHES TO SAFETY OF VOLUNTEERS

The safety of volunteers has been a matter of attention for some time already. In the first survey round of this programme generation, conducted in late 2023 and early 2024, 19% of respondents involved in individual volunteering projects said they had, or observed, safety concerns during their project. This percentage has jumped to 24% in the second survey round, conducted in late 2025 and early 2026. Projects and organisations have gotten slightly better in addressing safety concerns, potentially and hopefully showing first, but very tender and not yet significant, effects of the newly developed Safeguarding Guidelines (2025).

ADDRESSING SAFETY CONCERNS

“Were your safety concerns addressed? (2023)

0 = NOT AT ALL MEAN: 4.7 | MEDIAN 4.50 | N = 284 VERY MUCH = 10

“Were your safety concerns addressed? (2025)

0 = NOT AT ALL MEAN: 4.9 | MEDIAN 5.00 | N = 683 VERY MUCH = 10

Survey respondents of individual volunteering projects in the European Solidarity Corps. Dependency question, shown only to respondents who had, or observed, safety concerns.

$n_1 = 284$, $n_2 = 683$

“In the project, safer space policies were designed by the participating youth, and they are now implemented in all activities of our organisation. New, better practices for organising meaningful volunteer work for youth with different skillsets and interests have been developed and are continuously in use.”

*

Online survey respondent, project team member

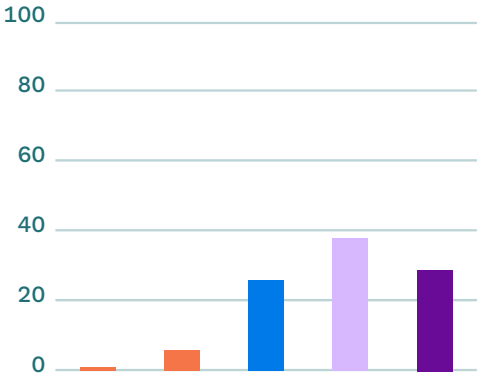
THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED

NEW TOOLS FOR POLICY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Policy development, cooperation, and dialogue are a key focus of the Erasmus+ programme. In the youth chapter of the programme, the EU Youth Dialogue has been established as a format where young people and youth organisations meet policy- and decision-makers. Being able to discuss political topics seriously is a relevant skill in this context, which we are tracking. It is one of the areas of competence development with plenty of room for improvement, with clear differences between formats, and with a growing gender gap. The figures below align well with the most recent Youth Dialogue consultation findings[1].

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS ASSESS THAT ...

> "... through the project, participants improved their ability to discuss political topics seriously.



67% agree or agree strongly

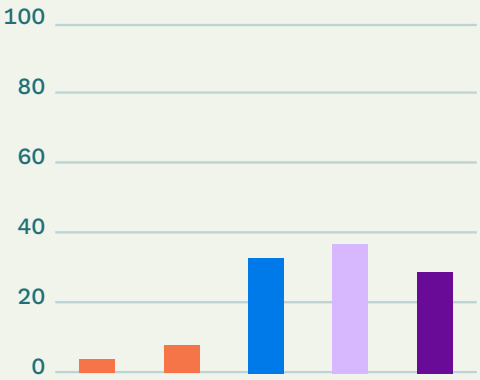
1% DISAGREE STRONGLY
6% DISAGREE
26% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
38% AGREE
29% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of project teams of youth projects in Erasmus+ Youth. n = 2.665

[1] Moxon, D., & Bárta, O. (2025). EUYD11 Results of the Consultation Phase: Connecting the EU with Youth. See in particular Fig 3.2 on p. 12. Online.

PARTICIPANTS OF YOUTH EXCHANGES ...

> ... say they improved their ability to discuss political topics seriously through their project.



55% agree or agree strongly

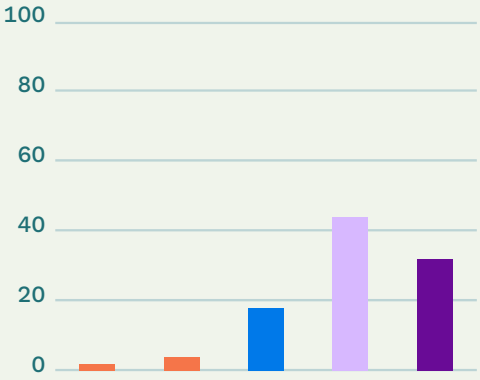
4% DISAGREE STRONGLY
8% DISAGREE
33% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
37% AGREE
18% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of youth exchange projects in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 7.888

PARTICIPANTS OF PARTICIPATION PROJECTS ...

> ... say they improved their ability to discuss political topics seriously through their project.



76% agree or agree strongly

2% DISAGREE STRONGLY
4% DISAGREE
18% NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE
44% AGREE
32% AGREE STRONGLY

Survey respondents of youth participation projects in Erasmus+ Youth.

n = 2.386

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED

A BUDGET THAT MATCHES NEEDS AND POTENTIAL

Project teams assess the adequacy of their project funding generally positive, with a slight improvement from 2023 to 2025 – likely owed to the progression of accreditations, which is also reflected in our sample. The real hurdle remains gaining access to the European youth programmes. The success rate of the youth chapter in Erasmus+ has dropped to 31%, which is abysmally low when compared to school education (48%), vocational education (59%), and higher education (82%). In total numbers, 18.535 projects could be granted from 59.751 applications between 2021 and 2024. In no other sector is the relation between demand and potential of the field, and the budgetary possibilities of the programme, so unequal.

ADEQUACY OF FUNDING

“How adequate was the project funding? (2023)

0 = NOT AT ALL MEAN: 7.3 | MEDIAN 8.00 | N = 2.809 VERY MUCH = 10

“How adequate was the project funding? (2025)

0 = NOT AT ALL MEAN: 7.8 | MEDIAN 8.00 | N = 2.472 VERY MUCH = 10

Survey respondents of project teams of youth exchanges and participation projects in Erasmus+. n_1 = 2.809, n_2 = 2.472

“The exchange had a significant and lasting impact on our organisation. We have established strong and trusted relationships with the municipality and youth centre. These partnerships have developed beyond the framework of a single Erasmus+ exchange and have created a solid foundation for long-term cooperation.”

Online survey respondent, project team member

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Research-based analysis of European youth programmes